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THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ORIGINS OF THE NEGRO CHURCH

by

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PREFACE

The attempt to connect the present established Negro church in America with the native religious beliefs and practices of West coast and South African Natives may be looked upon as a new venture. Discoveries in the field of the social sciences convinces one however, that socio-religious customs and traditions may persist through the centuries and may survive the most exhaustive efforts toward extermination. There are certain distinctive qualities inherent in the American Negro church which set it apart and stamp it with a certain uniqueness in the life activities of a vast majority of Afro-Americans. These "distinctive qualities" which we seek to account for, constitute the soul of the church organization for these people and appear to be a certain "plus" to the religious patterns bequeathed American Negroes by the White churches.

The facility and eagerness with which untutored Blacks seized upon the gospel of Christ as a means of compensation and as an escape mechanism explains how and why these slaves were able to survive the devastating rigours of slavery and the reconstruction era. Thus, in viewing the background of these twelve million Colored Americans one is able to understand many of the problems of this minority group today and is enabled to offer intelligent advise whenever a problem arises relative to them.

The Department of Social Principles of the Pacific School of Religion offers opportunity to the student-pastor to discover the essential case histories of the members of his parish and to study those institutions which most profoundly affect their lives. This thesis, therefore, is the attempt of a pastor to know and understand the salient facts in the history of the most important organization in the lives of his people.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE AMONG AMERICAN NEGROES

I Introduction

A number of pamphlets, news articles and books have been written during the past quarter of a century concerning the largest and most potent organization in the life of the American Negro--the church. Much valuable information has been brought to light by the historians, Daniel A. Payne, Carter G. Woodson, W. A. Daniels, and more recently by Mays and Nicholson. The contributions of these men are noteworthy and of fundamental importance in the study of the American Negroes' largest and strongest organization. Only one author, however, Carter G. Woodson, has carried his study of the religious life of the American Negro beyond the history of his experiences and environment on the North American continent. It is proposed, in this study, to touch upon the African background in order to gain a perspective for the discussion of the development of the life of the Negro in America today; to point out some of the fundamental factors in the growth of his religious institutions; to describe the crisis facing the church of these people today and to suggest a program of Social Action for the local A.M.E. Church in Oakland, California. It is hoped that this thesis may serve as the foundation for a more complete study of the social institutions among these people on the Pacific coast.

THE AFRICAN HERITAGE AND THE SLAVE TRADE

The ever alluring and beckoning lands of the middle Atlantic and southern states which had been freely given to settlers from Europe, offered opportunity for cultivation and the subsequent enrichment of the owners. Crops suited to the soil and climate of the south i.e. tobacco, rice, indigo and cotton awaited the hand of the laborer to make the barren wastes and the uncultivated fields "blossom as the rose". Indentured white servants, brought from England, solved the problem only temporarily. In 1619 Virginia received her first ship load of Africans and one hundred pauper children, and from this date the African slave trade was to play an increasing part in the history of America.[1]

There were three hundred Negroes in Virginia in 1650 and two thousand in 1671. By 1721 the Negroes comprised one half of Maryland's population, more than one half of Virginias', one third of North Carolina's and four sevenths of South Carolina's. There were 75,000 slaves in the colonies in 1725; 250,000 in the colonies in 1725; 250,000 in the colonies by 1750 and 500,000 in 1776.[2] Advertisements for the sale of these

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1 Bancroft, Frederic, Slave Trading in The Old South, p. 2

2 DuBois, E. B., Suppression of The African Slave Trade, p.5

slaves revealed the fact that most of them were captured on the West coast of Africa. They were billed for sale as: "Very Prime Congo slaves" or prime Mandingo Africans" or "Choice Gold Coast negroes" or "Prime Windward Coast Africans".

The invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793 increased the demand for cheap labor and helped to fasten the institution of slavery upon the United States of America. Whitney's hand gin made it possible for one person to accomplish fifty times as much as previously and helped to usher in the reign of "King Cotton". By 1840 there were 800,000 slaves and 100,000 white laborers raising cotton, and by 1860 there were 2,225,000 slaves who were dependent principally on the culture of cotton.[3]

W. E. B. DuBois, Author of The Suppression of The African Slave Trade, estimated that over five million blacks were stolen from the west coast of Africa for the slave trade. Hundreds of thousands of these helpless souls perished at sea and their bodies were tossed overboard. Thousands who survived the arduous passage were landed at American ports and sold into bondage. These slaves came bringing the tribute of labor--the tribute of unrequited toil. They came bringing also a gift that so many historians have overlooked, the gift of native African religion. This native gift of faith in

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[3]Bancroft, Frederic, Slave Trading in The Old South, p. 12

a God was to meet and to fuse itself with the teachings of the Saviour of Men, the Man of Galilee. This religious heritage was destined to become identified with the most precious possession of mankind--the Christian faith.

Basic in the life experiences of the West Coast Africans is his religion. He believes in a world of spriits, he believes in a God and he believes that man is immortal. Man can commune with the spirits of departed friends. This faith in a spirit world is aptly expressed by an authority on the beliefs of these people:

> "You should watch him as he takes offerings of food and drink to the graveside. There he carefully sets a chair for the dear one gone before, then places the meal in order, and pours out a libation, addressing the spirit of the departed the while. He earnestly believes that the spirit of the departed relative hovers around him by day as well as by night, and he has both the physical and the spiritual sense to perceive its presence. He sees in the mammiferous bat, winging its flight from room to room at night in the home once dear to the loved one, who is supposed to dominate it, a kindly providence which does not leave him all forlorn in his grief, but sends the spirit of the departed back occasionally to watch and to protect. He even speaks to it in endearing terms at times, and would fain believe that it understands and is in full sympathy with him. You may sneer at the seeming simplicity of the native mind, but the Aborigines believe that there are mysteries in this world yet unrevealed to man. He, the Native, implicitly believes in ghosts, and has many an authentic story to tell of some strange visitation which he has experienced. Nay, more, his sense of smell detects the presence of a ghost in a house."

> "Mark you, he does not look to communion with the gross, material matter that lies mouldering in the grave; but he looks to that indefinable something beyond, which has defied the reason of mankind for all time. He looks beyond his present

> squalid surroundings to a world hereafter where he will meet every member of his family, and particularly those whom he has loved dearly. . . . It matters not what may happen today, since tomorrow may find him in the grave at rest with his forefathers. In this happy frame of mind he goes through life contentedly, free from carking care, and wonders at all the excitement and ado of men of another race. And as for a material hell, the scarecrow of the missionaries, he merely smiles at such a suggestion. Is there not trouble enough in this world? God knows there is. Why should God add trouble to trouble?"[4]

Thus varying conceptions of God are found among the west coast natives. The idea of a generative and fertilizing force is present in their religious beliefs. The first fruits of spring sowing and firstlings of stock raising are put aside for the use of Deity. "Almost all the prayers of the Yorubans, all their rituals, always culminate in the petition for fruit fullness of their fields, the blessings of children in families, and aid in every kind of propagation."[5]

A priestcraft led by the various kings is also found on the coast-home of the American Negro slave. The priest and the medicine man often function as one and the same office. A rigorous system of study and preparation (according to the standards of primitive religion) is required of all candidates for holy orders, and the graduation exercises are usually attended by exciting, religious tribal dances during the course of which a "fetish" is said

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[4]Hayford, Casely, Gold Coast Native Institutions, pp. 101-3

[5]Woodson, Carter, G., The Negro In Our History, p.

to come upon the candidate. A belief in ancestor worship is also found among some of the tribes of the west coast Natives.[6] Tribes in the interior of Liberia, west coast Republic founded by American Negroes, observe religious rites attending:

1. The period of adolescence in boys and girls. (Both sexes have special instruction during this period.)
2. Religious rites attending courtship and marriage.
3. Religious basis of the practise of morals.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, noted composer of Negro-English ancestry, shows the striking parallels between the American Negro Spirituals and the West Coast African tribal chants. Mr. Taylor discovered the great similarities in the melodies and rhythm of the music of these widely separated groups and recorded this information in his book of Forty Negro Spirituals. Recent studies of native African music by Roland Hayes and Clarence Cameron White, American Negro musicians, seem to confirm the findings of Samuel C. Taylor and helps to identify the American Negro Spirituals as fundamentally African in rhythm and melody and fused with an American Christian idealism which was born of the soil of oppression and sorrow.

UNITY OF PRIMITIVE AND MODERN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

We cannot fail to witness the unity of primitive and

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[6]Kingsley, Mary H., West Africa Studies, pp. 113, 114.

modern religious worship and belief. Evidences of the unity of these beliefs may be recorded as follows:

1. The Priests of God possessed of divine power to heal (Mana).
2. Presence of the officer in religious ceremonies.
3. The existence of the ritual (however crude).
4. Employment of potent substances for healing.
5. Rigorous use of dogmatism by the witch doctor.
6. The argument of the "vicious circle" i.e. "you will succeed unless some other power or sin interferes".
7. The religious tribal dance and music.
8. The church in varied form.
9. Presence of symbolism (banners, effigies, totems, etc.)

Professor Lev'y Bruhl, representative of the right wing of the Durkheim School, makes an important statement which has its bearing upon the consideration of primitive religious life among West Coast African natives. Lev'y Bruhl insisted that "The phenomena which we encounter in studying primitive society are collective phenomena. Ceremonies, myths, rules of behaviour, language, religion--all of these represent collective modes of action and reaction and they must be the expressions of a collective mentality".[7] Furthermore, E. E. Tylor and Herbert Spencer both point out the universality of the belief in animism as seen in the losing of the mind,

[7]Goldenweiser, A. A., Early Civilization, p. 381

fits, appearance of a shadow, an echo, reflection in the water. Primitive man knew nothing of the working of the human mind but he made these conclusions: "There is not one self but two selves; things can have doubles; while you are asleep some one is alive in you; while you are sick some one in you is responsible for that; when you sneeze the fellow inside of you is only "jumping out"; the other fellow in you may still live after you are gone."[8]

Native peoples in Africa, Northern Asia and the South Sea Islands still practice forms of primitive religion. Survivals from centuries past may be found in the present day beliefs and practices. A review of the social organization and culture of the Bantu people disclosed:

> The social unit in the village (head man); a number of villages are ruled by a chief; nations have existed under kings (Maidi, Chaka, and Sebitwane); Bantu tribes show traces of totemism; marriage within the clan is not allowed. These basic elements of community, village and national organization have come down through the years to exist in the present social organization.[9]

Belief in a more or less personal supreme being and personal spirits belonging to a lower grade is found here. Belief in "dynamism", energy and potence which is immanent in all things (akin to the "Mana" of the Melanesians) exists.

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[8]Goldenweiser, A. A., Lectures on "Primitive Religion", University of Oregon 1932

[9]Smith, Edwin W., The Religion of Lower Races, pp. 6-7

This great "dynamism" is ministered through the doctors and divinities and takes various forms in application as:

1. In medical remedies (The plantation doctor with his roots and herbs and the mid-wife.)

2. In good luck charms, amulets worn upon the person, teeth, etc. Here is a parallel in our Catholic charms. The survival appears among American Negroes and American white people.

3. In fetishes, with their spiritual power. A charm with a "plus" i.e. the spirit attached to it. The rabbits' foot, good luck powders, etc.

4. In the practice of witchcraft. This power is used to act upon people over a distance. Acts of bewitchery are used as: pointing the index finger at the intended victim; stabbing the foot prints of a person and thus causing his death; obtaining hair or nail clippings of the victim and thus getting a "hold" upon him. Here we find a striking similarity in witch-craft among American Negroes, witch-craft in early New England history, and the modern "hexing" demonstrations in Pennsylvania.

5. Tabus regarding food and drink, restrictions relative to marriage.

6. Moral values of these practices operate in much the same way as our Christian "curse" or "blessing" works today, and one may find himself within or without the pale in proportion as he conforms to or disregards the moral law.[10]

A belief in immortality is held by the Bantu people. "The funeral services of the Bantu make it clear that they, like we assume that personality continues after death." The funeral services are attended by sincere emotional demonstrations of grief and there is evidence of belief

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[10]Smith, Edwin W., The Religion of Lower Races, p. 5

in the life hereafter as shown in the giving of food to the corpse for a long, long journey, and in the exhortations: "Do not forget us! A good journey to you! Tell old friends who have died before that you have left us living well!" The deceased are thought of as going to live in the sky (heaven); being near us--"surrounded by a cloud of witnesses"; gone to the village under the earth to reap abundant harvests (green pastures); and some have returned to be reborn in human or animal form.[11]

In the belief in "dynamism" (mana) ministered through the native "doctors", medical remedies, charms, fetishes, witch-craft, the taboo, and in the persistence of the belief in immortality, we find distinguishing elements of the Bantu's religious belief which have been diffused in, and still survive through Christian practice in the Negro Church of America. These factors would seem to constitute a native religious foundation upon which the Christian super-structure has been erected. Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, President of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, has prepared a report for the Phelps-Stokes Fund which deals with the question of the native African Religious background. The report is significant in the appraisal of present day religious tendencies among these people and in the implications it gives of the religious and social

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[11] Smith, Edwin W., Ibid p. 28

practices which formed the background of the African who lives in America today:

> "The teacher should have clearly in mind the habits that are especially required to correct, control, and guide the emotional activities characteristic of the African people. He should know the superstitions, traditions, and tribal customs that determine and limit the character life of the native African.
>
> "The native African is intensely religous according to his own ideas of religion. He has vivid consciousness of unknown forces controlling his life."[12]

It would seem, from the foregoing facts, that the slaves brought from Africa many of their religious and superstitious beliefs. Southern slave owners who tried to give their wards a minimum of religious instruction, discovered that "the tenacity with which the Negroes clung to their primitive beliefs made very difficult the problem of slave holders who were inclined to give them religious training. During the first century of American slavery very little effort was made to Christianize the Negroes. Obstacles to the work seemed overwhelming".[13]

Did not these sable men and women, these slaves, remember something of the socio-religious heritage which had been their possession for centuries? Customs, habits, beliefs, taboos, superstitions are passed on from generation to generation and it is only reasonable to suppose that the black servant brought something of his native

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[12]Jones, Thomas J., A Study of West, South and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission, pp. 27,28

[13]Bruner, C.V., An Abstract of the Religious Instruction of the Slaves in the Ante-Bellum South,

social and religious life to America with him. A new and modern emphasis of this point of view is presented by Claude McKay, young Negro poet:

> "The most African characteristic of Harlem, after the color of its people, is the multitude of amazing cults. Native African churches (so-called), groups of Negro-Jews, and a host of straight Christian and revival sects pullulate in Harlem. To say that there is a cult to every block would be no exaggeration.
>
> "It is through religion, more than any other channel, that primitive African emotions find expression in our modern civilization. Indoors and along the pulpit pavements of Harlem, black men and women, some singularly robed, ecstatically prance and reel and writhe with a fervor that is tolerated simply because their exhibitions bear the label of religion. No Negro cabaret or Negro theater could permit the display of such very African antics.
>
> "Returning to Harlem after three years spent in North Africa, I had a queer, topsy-turvy sensation when I mingled with folk who were so similar physically to those in North Africa (and from the same cause--miscegnation) but in spirit so different, though they have precisely the same strenuous preoccupation with religion. My arrival in Harlem coincided with a big religious parade. The streets were massed with marching people, led by bands of music, shouting, singing, bearing banners proclaiming, "Father Divine is God;" "God Almighty is Father Divine". Automobiles loaded with enthusiastic disciples were bright with pennants praising Father Divine. Spectators jammed the pavements. Exciting black and brown faces, framed in apartment windows, beamed down on the scene. Suddenly an airplane droned through the clouds, and looking up the people shouted: 'God! God! There goes Father! Father Divine is God! The True and Living God!' Never had I seen such excitement in Harlem except in the days of Marcus Garvey's Back-to-Africa movement.
>
> 'Father Divine is God!' With that one phrase Father Divine stands out above all other

leaders and their cults. God, who was invisible to all before, is now personified in him."[14]

UNITY OF PRIMITIVE AND MODERN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The West Coast African Slave found himself in a strange land when he landed in America. The kings, chiefs, medicine men, witch doctors, and priests of his native habitat no longer exercised lordship over him! "A new ruler had arisen who knew not Joseph." He found himself exposed to social proscription, economic limitation and spiritual domination. His life was no longer his own. He had been stolen from a care free life and suddenly made a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. He could not fight back effectively--to try to do so would mean extermination. He must work out a technique of survival. He must make the very difficulty adjustment or be lost. Accordingly the slave learned to smile and dance and he developed a delightful sense of humor. The finest and best technique of survival, however, was the religious technique as expressed in the birth of the Negro Spirituals and in the early establishment of his own church life. Here under his own vine and fig tree the weary slave might release his suppressed emotions; here develop his own leadership; here he could preach and sing; here in the quiet and calm of the night he could "Steal Away To Jesus". Thus through the spirituals, songs of the "soil

[14]McKay, Claude, "There Goes God", The Nation, Feb. 6, 1935

and of the soul" which exhude the joy and sorrow, the hope and despair of these servants of men, an instrument of triumphant survival was found. This means of deliverance was the gift of "Black and Unknown Bards":

> There is a wide, wide wonder in it all,
> That from degraded rest and servile toil
> The fiery spirit of the seer should call
> These simple children of the sun and soil.
> O black slave singers, gone, forgot, unfamed
> You--you alone, of all the long, long line
> Of those who've sung untaught, unknown, unnamed,
> Have stretched out upward, seeking the divine.
>
> You sang not deeds of heroes or of kings;
> No chant of bloody war, no exulting pean
> Of arms-won triumphs; but your humble strings
> You touched in cord with music empyrean.
> You sang far better than you knoew; the songs
> That for your listeners' hungry hearts sufficed
> Still live--but more than this to you belongs:
> You sang a race from wood and stone to Christ.[15]

THE NEW ENVIRONMENT

In the new environment and as a slave, the black worker passed through four periods of religious instruction and experience. These periods are cited by Dr. C. V. Bruner, in his book, The Religious Instruction of Slaves". The first period of religious experience in the new land found little evangelistic work being done among these workers. Fear was expressed that Christianizing of the bondsmen might lead to their emancipation; that it might tend to raise the standard of living for the slaves and thus bring about attendant expense; the belief was prevalent that these laborers could not under-

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[15] Johnson, James Weldon, The Book of American Negro Poetry, Poem, "Black and Unknown Bards".

stand religious training, and the Church of England, which dominated the religious field in the Southland was totally lacking in religious enthusiasm and missionary zeal. However, Quakers and Moravians began to show interest and in 1688 the Quakers made the first protest against slavery in America.

A second period of religious interest is noted during the days of the Great Awakening. 1740-1790 Protestant Missionaries of the Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist and Congregational churches began their work in the south and thousands of slaves were inducted into the Christian church during this fifty year period.

During the years 1790-1830 a "retardation of the missionary work among the slaves" was in evidence. A wave of atheism, aftermath of the French Revolution, swept over America; Anti-slavery societies of the north antagonized and retarded the religious movement in the south; insurrections by the slaves (led by Vesey and Nat Turner) made slave holders suspicious of the church influence. During this period, however, two independent Negro denominations were born--the African M. E. Church and the African M. E. Church, Zion. A number of independent Negro Baptist Churches were established in these years.

The fourth period of development in the church life of the slaves took place during the years 1830-1845 and

was, largely, a duplication of the third stage of religious development among these people. Fears of insurrection and rebellion, and resentment to anti-slavery propaganda retarded the work of the church on the plantations. Laws were enacted forbidding Negro preachers to address congregations, prohibiting instruction of colored youth and limiting the convocation of blacks through out the south.

During the years 1845-1860 a great religious development among Negroes occurred as a result of the following reasons:

1. The abolition influence had been removed from Southern churches by schisms of 1844 and 1845.

2. Planters were convinced of the value of religious instruction in increasing the worth of the slaves.

3. Religious training of the Negroes answered the protests of the Abolitionists.

4. Religious training tended to keep the workers satisfied and happy. It is estimated that by 1860 approximately one fourth of all slaves above 16 years were members of the church.[16]

Mays and Nicholson point out, also, that the characteristic forces underlying Negro church origins in America have been five: growing racial consciousness, individual initiative, splits and withdrawals, the migration and missions of the church.[17]

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[16]Bruner, C. V., Op. Cit.

[17]Mays and Nicholson, The Negro's Church, p. 37

Through the individual and combined agencies of all these causes which may be defined as historical and political, racial, economic and religious, the masses of slaves and Freedmen embraced the gospel of the Lowly Nazarene and the church became a basic and central social institution in the life of the American Negro.

THE NEGRO CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

The Negro church is the American Negro's outstanding institution. The Colored church affords its members a great number of secular pleasures in addition to the happiness gained from the religious life. The church is a social center, a club, a place of self expression and realization for the Negroes, and they support it because it remains the one resort in the community where they may develop their latent powers without embarrassment or restraint. The church among the Negroes in this country had its genesis during the days of slavery. It served as a "means of grace" and a medium through which the slave might realize his happiness and joy in a heaven to come. Mays and Nicholson advance the following argument for the growth and development of the Negro's church in America:

1. The Negro achieved a measure of freedom through the church. As early as 1773-1775 there is a record of the founding of a church for Negroes at Silver Bluff, South Carolina. David George, a slave, was ordained to carry on the religious work there. George Liele, slave, helped

to organize the first Negro Baptist church in 1779.

In Virginia, between 1770 and 1800 many Negroes distinguished themselves as preachers and won "freedom in Negro church life" which they could not experience in any other field.

2. The closing of the Civil war did not remove all restrictions upon the black man. Again he was able to lift himself out of his restricted environment and to find expression through his own church.

3. Special encouragement was given the Negroes by white friends in the matter of building and developing churches, and this was done in the following way:

   By direct acts of discrimination against them.

   By financial aid in the erection of churches.

   Separating Negroes under white supervision.

   By giving church buildings to Negroes or encouraging them to remain at the old sites after the white congregation has moved.

   Through friendly counsel and advise.

4. Within his own church institution the Negro has developed many of the "opportunities" which have been denied him in the body politic. He has developed his own caste system within the church; miniature Republican, Democratic, Bull Moose, Socialist, Communist and Epic religio-political parties are in evidence.[18]

Denominational rivalry, the fight for leadership, the idea of the "call" are patterns carried over from the white church organizations into the Negroes' own faith. A consideration of the religious life of these people, therefore, is most important to an intelligent

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[18] Mays and Nicholson, Op. cit.

understanding of any of the major problems facing them today.

LEADERSHIP OF THE NEGRO CLERGY

The days of slavery and the period that followed in the Reconstruction witnessed a strengthening and an expansion of the religious field among these people. Missions conducted by Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists and Episcopalians drew thousands of the Afro-Americans into the Christian fold. Religious and educational agencies sprang up on all sides. The Freedmen's Bureau, The American Missionary Association of the Congreational Church, the Jeannes Fund, The Rosenwald Foundation--all with their roots in the soil of religious interests, did incalcuable work in the service of christianizing and educating the Negro. The intensive and wide spread activity of these organizations helped to develop religious leaders and spokesmen who were destined to do yeoman service in the interest of their own people.

The old fashioned Negro Preacher became the means of laison between white and black people througout the country. He became a preacher, teacher, doctor, lawyer, social worker and politician all rolled into one. W.E.B. DuBois, sociologist, has described this unique figure of American-Negro life: "The Preacher is the most unique personality developed by the Negro on American soil. A leader, a politician, an orator, a "boss", an intriguer,

an idealist--all these he is, and ever too the center of a group of men, now twenty, now a thousand in number. The combination of a certain adroitness with deep seated earnestness, of tact with consumate ability, gave him his pre-eminence, and helps him maintain it."[19] This preacher of the Reconstruction days possessed a native eloquence and a gift of imagination which drew thousands of listeners of both races. He could paint the glories of a world to come or the misery and sorrow of a hell to be shunned with such vividness that "mourners and sinners" flocked to the standard of the church. The mystery of Creation was explained by a prophet of the old school in this way:

"And God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said:
I'm lonely--
I'll make me a world.

"And as far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.

"Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And God said: That's good!

"Then God reached out and took the light in his hands,
And rolled the light around in his hands
Until he made the sun;
And he sent that sun a-blazing in the heavens.

"And the light that was left from making the sun

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[19] DuBois, W. E. B., The Souls of Black Folk, pp. 190, 191

God gathered it up in a shining ball
And flung it against the darkness,
Spangling the night with moon and stars.
Then down between
The darkness and the light
He hurled the world;
And God said: That's good!

"Then God himself stepped down--
And the sun was on his right hand,
And the moon was on his left;
And the stars were clustered about his head,
And the earth was under his feet.
And God walked, and where he trod
His footsteps hollowed the valleys out
And bulged the mountains up.

"Then He stooped and looked and saw
That the earth was hot and barren.
So God stepped over to the edge of the world
And he spat out the seven seas--
He batted his eyes, and the lightnings flashed--
He clapped His hands, and the thunders rolled--
And the waters above the earth came down,
The cooling waters came down."[20]

A study of the Negro Ministry was conducted by W. A. Daniel in 1926, and more recently a thesis was completed by Mays and Nicholson, which included 591 urban pastors, revealed that eighty percent of these pastors were not college trained; 86 percent do not possess the B. D. degree; 81.6 percent have neither the B. D. nor the B. Th. degree; 72.3 percent have neither college nor Seminary degrees, and the younger men possess better training, academically, than their elders. It was apparent that the number of college students planning to enter the ministry was small compared with the number

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[20]Johnson, James Weldon, God's Trombones, "The Creation"

entering other professions.[21]

The leader in this field often gained his place by virtue of a "call from God"; and in consequence many of the fundamental attributes usually gained in a formal education were taken for granted by the self-called leader and his congregation. It was believed that "God will fill the mouth of his anointed with words of wisdom and truth". The intellectual status of the Negro Ministry has suffered as a consequence of this belief and practise. The following table shows the training of 591 city pastors of Negro congregations:

TABLE NO. 1

Negro Ministers	No.	Per cent
Without degree of any kind	427	72.3
A.B. degree only	55	9.3
A.B. and B.D. degrees	55	9.3
B.D. degree only	24	4.1
B.Th degree only	22	3.7
A.B. and B.Th. degrees	8	1.3
Total	591	100.0 [22]

Theological Training of 591 Urban Negro Ministers:

	No.	Per cent
Theological Equipment		
B.D. or S.T.B.	70	13.4
B. Th. degree	30	5.0
Without Seminary degree	482	81.6
Total	591	100.0 [23]

[21] Mays and Nicholson, Op. cit., pp. 55,56

[22] Mays and Nicholson, Op. cit. p. 302

[23] Mays and Nicholson, Op. cit. p. 301

The number of urban Negro pastors in this study is representative of a small city cross-section of the leaders in this field, and of the number considered 252 are in the North and 330 are in the Southern centers of population. Although the number of pastors here considered is small in proportion to the total number of leaders in this field, nevertheless the study presents a fair sampling of the Negro clergy in the metropolitan centers of the country. And since the urban centers generally attract the best and most ambitious men in many of the professions, we may assume that the leadership of the rural Negro church presents a lower standard of intellectual equipment and training than that revealed in the study of the city pastorates. A demand, therefore, for a more liberal and thorough training of these leaders becomes imperative for the future development of the church of Christ among these people.

DENOMINATIONS AMONG AMERICAN NEGROES

Negro Methodists.

The largest Negro Methodist denomination is the African M. E. Church which claims a membership of 545,818. The second largest Negro Methodist denomination is the African M. E. Zion church. The only real difference in these two denominations may be said to be in the use of the word, "Zion". The African M. E. Church records its early history:

"In November, 1787, the colored people be-

> longing to the Methodist Society of Philadelphia convened together, in order to take into consideration the evils under which they labored, arising from the unkind treatment of their white brethern, who considered them a nuisance in the house of worship, and even pulled them off their knees, while in the act of prayer, and ordered them to the back seats. For these, and various other acts of un-Christian conduct, they considered it their duty to devise a plan in order to build a house of their own, to worship God under their own vine and fig tree."[24]

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion church describes its beginnings as follows:

> "The John Street Church was the first Methodist church erected in that city. (New York City) There were several members in this church from its first organization. Between the years 1765 and 1796 the number of colored members largely increased, so much so that caste prejudice forbade their taking the Sacrament until the white families were all served. This, and the desire for other church privileges denied them, induced them to organize among themselves which they did in the year 1796. This was the first African Methodist Episcopal church of which we have any account. In the year 1800 they built a church and called it Zion."[25]

The A. M. E. Church is divided into eighteen districts including North and South America, West and South Africa. The A. M. E. Zion Church is divided into fourteen districts including North and South America, West African and the Virgin Islands. The A. M. E. Zion church estimates its membership as 456,813.

Both of these Negro Methodist denominations use the Episcopal form of government as set forth by the parent

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[24] A. M. E. Discipline, p. 1--1905

[25] A. M. E. Zion Discipline, p. 10--1924

body, the Methodist Episcopal church (white). There is practically no difference in hymnals, disciplines and methods of the two organizations. The general conferences of these two church bodies voted in May 1928 to unite the two groups into the "United Methodist Episcopal Church", but the union has not been consumated. Twenty-five articles of faith are used by both churches.

Negro Baptists

Negro Baptists in North America number approximately three million persons. They are divided into two main church factions: The "L. K. Williams faction" of Chicago, Illinois, and the "Boyd Faction" of Nashville, Tenn. Every church is self-governing and the minister and his Board of Deacons constitute the court of last resort for each church. The Baptists meet in annual conventions in city, county, state and national organization. Rules governing the conduct of the Baptist church are set forth in the "Standard Manual for Baptist Churches".[26]

Additional "Optional Standing Resolutions" are included in the Standard Manual which are often resorted to by the more orthodox Baptist churches among the Negroes. Resolutions are often rigidly enforced relative to drinking, card-playing and dancing. On a whole, the Negro Baptist organization follows the pattern of the white group of that faith and there is often an exchange of

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[26] Hiscox, E. The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches, p. 41

fellowship between and within the two racial religious groups of the same denomination. "Baptism by immersion" is one of the outstanding tenants of the church and the conservative right wing and the liberal left wing exponents exist in the Negro as in the White parent body. The evangelistic and belligerent battle cry of the "hard shell" members of the faith is still audible in some sections of the land:

"I am Baptist born
I am Baptist bred
And when I die--
I'll be Baptist dead!"

Holiness Churches

Another religious group of considerable size is that of the "holiness faith". Within this group is found the denominations known as "The House of Prayer", the Pentacostal Faith, and the Church of God in Christ. Mays and Nicholson point out the rapid growth of this group during the past fifteen years. In some of the rural and urban districts of the south and east it has caught up to and passed many of the Methodist and Baptist organizations in numbers of churches and membership. (See statistical table page 13--The Negro's Church). The doctrines common to the various branches of this faith may be summarized as follows: Belief in the trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God; belief in the personality of the holy spirit; man is by nature

sinful and fallen; belief in the baptism of the holy ghost with the sign and seal of speaking in tongues; use of water baptism; belief in the second coming of Christ; the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath; rules concerning general church officers, elders, church property and political governments.

Although of recent origin, this religious body embraces many thousands of White and Negro followers. White church groups bearing the designations of "Holiness", "Pentecostal", etc., have their roots in the general Pentecostal church of that name which originiated on the Pacific coast.

> "In the year 1906 a great religious revival, under the auspices of Elder W. J. Seymour, of Los Angeles, California, swept over the western portion of these United States. Hundreds of people of all religious beliefs and denominations attended these meetings of this revival, and were baptised with the Holy Ghost and fire, as on the day of Pentecost, according to Acts 2:4, 10:44-6. The news of this revival reached Memphis, Tennessee, and Elders C. H. Mason, D. J. Young and W. J. Jegter went to California to attend these meetings, and while there, they also received the Pentecostal baptism."[27]

Other Denominations

Negro Catholics, Episcopalians, Christian Scientists, Seventh Day Adventists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians are identified with the white denominations of these faith and are governed by the laws and doctrines of these bodies. Negro members of white denominations form a minority group

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[27] S. S. Quarterly, 1932, Church of God In Christ, p. 174

in America. There are 407,000 Negro members in all the white church denominations of the United States.[28] Those factors which helped in forming and maintaining the typically Negro church have been mentioned in preceeding pages of this report.

The typically Baptist or Methodist church of the rural south, and in some urban centers in the north and west, reflects a curious blending of the white orthodox Christian teachings and practice plus the original music, emotion and native humor of the Negro. There are times when the preacher seems to be possessed, or as expressed by the members themselves, "full of the spirit of God", and there are times when the congregation is moved to deliriums of joy and religious esctacy.[29] Such occasions are often described as a "baptism of the Holy Gnost". Here the most primitive of practises and beliefs oftimes find room for expression.

Churches of the Pentecostal and Holiness group and some of the more orthodox of the Methodist and Baptist churches furnish ample opportunity for observation of the typically Negro church.

STATISTICAL TABLE OF NEGRO CHURCHES

Our study has pointed out something of the native

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[28] "Seattle Enterprise", April 1, 1932, Article by G.F. Schyler

[29] Pratt, J. E., The Religious Consciousness, p. 394

socio-religious heritage which was transplanted by the slave from his native hearth to the American shores. A recent study made by C. V. Bruner (Religious Instruction of Slaves) advances the thesis that approximately one fourth of all slaves, 16 years and above in age, had been inducted into the Christian church by the year 1860. It is also apparent, as the following tables show, that the white religious bodies have remained active in the religious and educational interests of these people unto the present day. The Negro church, therefore, has its roots (doctrine, denominational badges, theology, discipline and polity) in the virgin soil of the white parent bodies which afforded the patterns which have survived, in varied form, in the Negro religious groups of our own day.

TABLE II

NEGRO CHURCH OF WHITE DENOMINATIONS

	No. Urban & Rural (6,080)	Tot. Members 644,692	No. Sunday Schools 5,470	Students in S.S. 307,850	Value of Church Prop. $37,489,276
Total					
Adventist Bodies Adventist Chursh	6	164	4	94	4,950
Seventh Day Denomination	93	5,133	67	3,402	789,400
Regular Baptists	1	38			
Christian and Miss. Alliance	10	535	8	490	57,625
Christian Church (Gen. Com)	68	7,312	64	3,348	285,100
Church of Christ (Scientist)	1	274	1	395	254,061
Church of God	29	887	24	901	78,015
Church of God (Anderson, Ind.)	98	3,165	89	3,131	343,450
Churches of Christ	214	8,155	177	5,905	139,919
Church of God--N.A.	7	274	7	298	8,000
Congregational Churches	155	16,000	140	8,899	1,896,415
Disciples of Christ	487	37,325	397	14,848	1,495,568
Independent Churches	7	1,542	6	491	67,000
United Lutheran in America	1	126	1	90	13,000

TABLE V

ANNUAL EXPENDITURES FOR NEGRO EDUCATION BY CERTAIN RELIGIOUS BOARDS.[33]

	Annual Exp.	Permanent Fund for Ed.	Value of Prop.
Am. Bapt. Home Mission Board	$116,247	$1,597,700	$3,594,251
Am. Church Institute for Negroes (Episcopalian)	185,100	450,000	3,000,000
American Missionary Association	368,057	3,228,441	3,200,000
Church of Christ	91,072		500,000
Lutheran Evangelical Synod.	74,900		175,000
M. E. Board of Education	259,264	1,962,729	5,000,000
M. E. Church Women's House Missionary Society	104,975		360,000
Presby. Church in the U.S.A. Missions for Colored	405,327	1,994,032	3,560,000
United Presby. Board Missions for Freedmen	98,000	645,000	1,000,000

[33] Work, Monroe N., Negro Year Book, p. 213

TABLE II con.

NEGRO CHURCHES OF WHITE DENOMINATIONS

	No. Urban & Rural	Tot. Members	No. Sunday Schools	Students in S. S.	Value of Church Prop.
Evangelical Luthern	69	5,871	61	3,314	339,650
Methodist Episcopal	3,743	323,347	3,527	196,496	938,246
Methodist Protestant	46	2,529	42	1,283	91,650
Wesleyan Methodist	26	1,215	26	1,084	83,100
Moravian Church in America	1	694	1	208	30,000
Original Church of God	1	12			
Presbyterian Church in U.S.A.	450	37,090	400	27,817	3,285,860
United Presbyterian Church of N.A.	14	1,202	14	1,587	189,300
Presby. Church in U.S.	52	2,134	43	1,569	138,140
Protestant Episcopal Church	287	51,502	260	19,075	4,162,735
Reformed Episcopal Church	36	2,753	28	1,216	59,850
Roman Catholic Church	147	124,324	76	11,406	4,677,378
Salvation Army	5	495	5	470	67,064
National Spiritualist Association	17	904	1	10	

TABLE II con.

NEGRO CHURCHES OF WHITE DENOMINATIONS[30]

	No. Urban & Rural	Tot. Members	No. Sunday Schools	Students in S.S.	Value of Church Prop.
Progressive Spiritual Church	1	500			3,800
National Spirit Alliance of U.S.A.	8	190	1	23	

[30]Table--Page 261
Work, Monroe N., Negro Year Book 1931-'32
Tuskegee Institute, Alabama
Negro Year Book Publishing Co.

The Independent Negro denominations have grown rapidly in numbers and in economic value. With the parent bodies as patterns and guides, and with a native religious endowment and a desire for spiritual emancipation urging them on--the Freedmen evolved their strongest and largest institution within their own ranks:

TABLE III

INDEPENDENT NEGRO DENOMINATIONS

Denomination	No. of Churches	Members	No. Sunday Schools	No. Scholars	Value of Property
African Orthodox	13	1,568	11	445	30,000
African Orthodox of N.Y.	3	717	3	220	50,000
Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God	16	1,047	15	1,068	16,950
Negro Baptists	22,081	3,196,623	18,755	1,121,362	103,465,759
United American Free Will Baptist Church	166	13,396	144	5,077	308,425
Colored Primitive Bapt.	925	43,978	24	2,278	171,518
Church of Christ Holiness--U.S.A.	82	4,919	72	2,511	326,850
Church of God and Saints of Christ	112	6,741	67	2,010	149,210
Church of God in Christ	733	30,263	585	19,282	1,508,079
Church of God (Holiness)	29	2,278	27	1,246	159,700
Church of the Living God "The Pillar and Ground of Truth"	81	5,844	26	1,468	170,547
Church of The Living God Christian Workers For Fellowship	149	11,558	140	3,465	368,935

TABLE III con.

INDEPENDENT NEGRO DENOMINATIONS[31]

Denomination	No. of Churches	Members	No. Sunday Schools	No. Scholars	Value of Property
Free Christian Zion Church of Christ	5	187	5	97	22,000
Free Church of God in Christ	19	874	17	633	23,700
African M. E. Church	6,708	545,814	5,884	288,247	32,092,549
African M. E. Zion	2,466	456,813	2,429	267,141	18,515,723
Colored M. Protestant	3	533	3	98	36,000
Union Am. M. E.	73	10,169	69	4,240	478,951
African Union M. Protest.	43	4,086	42	2,851	476,269
Colored M. E.	2,518	202,713	2,351	103,523	9,211,437
Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church	48	4,538	42	2,882	184,075
Reformed Methodist Union Episcopal Church	25	2,265	19	673	
Independent African M. E. Chruch	29	1,003	26	663	98,050
Colored Cumberland Presbyterian Church	178	10,868	152	5,223	353,825
Total	36,505	4,558,795	30,908	1,836,703	168,293,352

[31]Table p. 262--Negro Year Book 1931-'32
Work, Monroe N.

The foregoing record shows the membership found in the Independent Negro church to be seven times as large as that in the white denominations. The value of the church property of the Colored denominations exceeds that allotted to the same group within the parent bodies by a ratio of five to one.

TABLE IV

URBAN AND RURAL NEGRO CHURCHES

The data on Negro Churches collected in 1926, by the U. S. Census Bureau shows the following:

Rural Churches		32,427
Urban Churches		10,158
	Total	42,585
Members, Rural		2,964,616
Members, Urban		2,238,871
	Total	5,203,487
Sunday Schools, Rural		27,350
Sunday Schools, Urban		9,028
Total Sunday Schools		36,378
Sunday School Scholars, Rural		1,278,485
Sunday School Scholars, Urban		866,068
Total Scholars		2,144,553
Value of Church Property, Rural		$ 60,051,670
Value of Church Property, Urban		145,703,958
Total value of Church Property		$205,782,628 [32]

[32] Negro Year Book 1931-'32, p. 260

THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION

In the development of the religious life among American Negroes the education of the youth became one of the aims of the church at an early date. Both White and Black denominations gave themselves to this task with great enthusiasm. Hundred of High Schools, Academies, Agricultural and Industrial Schools, colleges and universities for Negroes are located in America today (mainly in the south) as a direct out-growth of the religious-educational interests of the Christian Church. Some of the leading educational institutions for Negroes, as Fisk University; Howard, Tuskeegee Institute, Talladega, Lincoln University, Straight University, Wilberforce University, Biddle University (Johnson, C. Smith) grew out of this religious interest.

The American Missionary Association established at Fortress Monroe, Va. (September 17, 1861) "the first day school among Freedmen, Mary S. Peaks, a colored woman, was the teacher. This school laid the foundation of the Hampton Institute and was the beginning of the general education of the Negro in the south". The Freedmen's Bureau was organized in March 3, 1865 and in five years it established 4,239 schools, employed 9,307 teachers and instructed 247,333 pupils. Thus the Christian church sponsored, not only religious instruction, but laid the ground work for the present educational system among White and Black peoples of the south, east, north, and west.

THE CRISIS IN THE NEGRO CHURCH

It has been pointed out that the Negro church in America has served the race well during the days of slavery and the reconstruction era. We may agree that the Negro has found his greatest opportunity for self expression and development in the church. Negro leadership during the past seventy-five years has been found, for the most part, in the church. The old Negro preacher and the old church helped in the formation of character, in the development of personality and in the creation of better race relations. Today, however, this organization faces a great crisis. Will the leaders of this powerful Christian group be able to work out a new technique of survival? Some of the factors that have precipitated the crisis in the church are international, and some local in nature;

1. The trained or educated Negro seeks other professions as law, medicine, dentistry, teaching, business and civil service.

2. The modern Negro refuses to submit to a prejudiced Christianity.

3. An ever-growing force of well-trained Negro writers is releasing anti-church articles through the associated Negro press. These articles appear weekly and are read by a Negro public estimated at two millions.

4. An ignorant Negro ministry is unable to serve the Negro congregation of today and has no defense to offer to its attachers.

5. An unreasonable and unbusiness like finance and assessment system drives the membership away.

6. Attacks upon the Negro church from such men as H. L. Menken and Clarence Darrow are taking a toll of Negro church membership.

7. The Negro church, and the Christian Church in general, has failed to adapt its program to meet the changing needs of a rapidly evolving society. Here is another instance of social lag.

8. Attacks of Negro Communists who have been trained in Russia and returned to the United States to teach Negro youth.

A release in the Associated Negro Press Newspapers for the week of March 31, 1932 will serve to illustrate the third point:

> "The Negro church is losing out both in membership and finances, according to George S. Schuyler, New York editor and author in an article headed 'Black America Begins To Doubt' in April's American Mercury.
>
> The Negro, long considered irretrievably wedded to Christianity, is slowly turning from it, says Schuyler, who adds that in greater numbers he is remaining at home on the Sabbath and peruses the Sunday supplements.
>
> Mr. Schuyler cites a number of reasons for the decline in the power of the church. Among them are the practices of America which are completely at variance with the principles of Christianity, the corruption of the church itself as exposed through a growing press, the ignorance of the clergymen administering to the masses in the southland.
>
> . . . . It might be possible for the Negro church to halt the stampede by performing a major operation on itself, but surgeons skillful enough for the job are lacking. Meanwhile, the patient grows worse and erstwhile friends desert the bedside. With intelligent, educated laymen leaving in increasing numbers, and with less and less college men going into the ministry, it would seem that the Negro church, which began so auspiciously in America, and once contributed so much to the progress and development of the race, must descend

in the end to the level of a barbaric cult for the delectation of half-wits and the profit of cunning shamans."[34]

The preacher of the old days was cognizant of the problems of church leadership in his day. He lived and worked during slavery and the days of the reconstruction era when white and black citizens faced perilous times. The prophet of old made a good leader and evolved a survial technique (a defence mechanism) which carried his fellow men through to a working adjustment. The old priest was an ignorant man in terms of literary attainment but wise in the technique of social diagnosis and successful planning and the ability to "follow up" his numerous clients. He prayed that God might qualify him for the exacting tasks of the hours:

"And now, O Lord, this man of God,
Who breaks the bread of life this morning--
Shadow him in the hollow of thy hand,
And keep him out of the gunshot of the devil.
Take him, Lord--this morning--
Wash him with hyssop inside and out,
Hang him up and drain him dry of sin.
Pin his ear to the wisdom post,
And make his words sledge hammers of truth--
Beating on the iron heart of sin.
Lord, God, this morning--
Put his eye to the telescope of eternity,
And let him look on the paper walls of time.
Lord, turpentine his imagination,
Put perpetual motion in his arms,
Fill him full of the dynamite of thy power,
Anoint him all over with the oil of thy salvation,
And set his tongue on fire."[35]

A new type of leader is needed to solve the problems

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[34]Schuyler, George, American Mercury, April 1932

[35]Johnson, James Weldon, God's Trombones, "Listen Lord".

which the modern church presents. In him must be combined the eloquence, sincerity, ability and imaginative power of the Reconstruction day preacher and the intelligence, patience and scientific spirit of the modern student of society. And this is indeed a sacred trust for it involves the daily task of Christian leadership, of noble example, of patient suffering and self abgnegation for the good of ones fellowmen. Here we are dealing with life, character, personality, God! Here we hope to cultivate, to direct, to caution, to teach, to attend--we seek emancipation of the spirits of men which is the only aristocracy worthy of the name, and to enjoy the fellowship of the great spirits of the ages. In our patience we would possess our souls!

Is not the problem of the American Negro Church likewise the problem of the Christian church in America? Do not the times call for an intelligent, teaching ministry of service?

> "Greeting his pupils, the master asked:
> What would you learn of me?
> And the reply came:
> How shall we care for our bodies?
> How shall we rear our children?
> How shall we work together?
> How shall we live with our fellow men?
> How shall we play?
> For what shall we live?
>
> And the teacher pondered these words,
> And sorrow was in his heart,
> For his own learning touched not these things."[36]

The "learning" of the leaders of the Christian Church and particularly of the American Negro Church must touch these things.

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[36]Chapman and Count's, Principles of Education (Foreword)

HISTORY OF THE FIRST A.M.E. CHURCH,
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

HISTORY OF THE FIRST A.M.E. CHURCH, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

NEGRO PIONEERS IN CALIFORNIA

In the preceeding chapter in which a brief history of the Development of the Religious Life among American Negroes was presented, we were enabled to observe something of the tremendous importance of the place of the church in the life of this group. Indeed, we cannot understand the problems, hopes and aspirations of these people apart from their religious life. An investigation of this "center of activity" among the Afro-Americans on the Pacific coast, and especially in the San Francisco Bay District, shows that the religious interest manifested itself early in the history of these people. As in the south and east, the church became the foundation for the general activities of the Freedmen in the early history of the Pacific coast.

The American Pioneers who blazed the trail with oxen teams and covered wagon trains, and laid the foundation of our present civilization, were gathered from every quarter of the north, east, south and middle west. The lure of adventure and the thirst for gold; the desire for new lands and the urge born of the philosphy of "Manifest Destiny"--all contributed to the spirit of the day which served to keep the feet of weary travellers in the paths which led westward. In un-ending streams they

crossed plains and valleys, mountains and hills enroute to California, the Golden land of promise. Hand in hand with explorers, trappers, priests, adventurers, farmers, mechanics, ne'er-do-wells, gamblers, miners and servants--came the Negro slave and Freedman. And along with baggage and earthly possessions the pioneer brought the traditions and institutions of the home town "back east and south"--across the plains to the western coast. An early authority speaks of the slaves who came to the Pacific coast:

> "The poor Negro slaves, as they started with their masters to California, thought only of the opportunity to work for their freedom. They were used to hardships. What did it matter if the road be long, full of dangers and obstacles? The one thought that fired their brains was that on the other side of the mountains were 'sweet Freedom's plains'."[1]

EARLY CHURCH INTERESTS.

Thus there was a wholesale transplanting of the mores of the south and east to the new lands of promise on the Pacific coast, and with the transference of these social institutions and customs came the Negro servant and freedman bringing his most sacred trust with him--his church.

The early influence of the church among these people in California is attested to in the records of "Negro Trail Blazers of California":

"The A.M.E. Church has been the leading spirit

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[1]Beasley, Delilah B., The Negro Trail Blazers of California, p. 69.

> in the building of California for the Negro, not-withstanding the other denominations, such as the Episcopalian church and their pastors have worked shoulder to shoulder. The other denominations were not so ably represented on the coast in pioneer days."[2]

The California Conference of the A.M.E. Church was organized in San Francisco, California, April 6, 1865. At that time the state had a population of 4,086 "Free people of color" and a Reverend Charles Stewart came from New York to the Bay district to start the work of the Pacific coast. Reverend Mr. Stewart arrived in San Francisco Bay February 11, 1852. On February 22, 1852 the first African Methodist meeting house on the coast was dedicated by Rev. George Taylor of Boston, Mass. The Reverend Joseph Thompson, who had been ordained in England in the Wesleyan Methodist church, was installed as pastor in March 1852.[3]

BEGINNINGS OF THE FIRST A.M.E. CHURCH IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

The precedent set by the church in San Francisco was soon followed by Colored people in other parts of the state. Residents of the east Bay district laid the foundation for their church home in the spring of 1858. A mission was organized on Fifth Street near "the point" in Oakland, and the mission grew into a virile church by 1863. Today this church organization is known as the First A.M.E. Church

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[2]Beasley, Delilah B. op. cit. p. 159

[3]Beasley, Delilah B. op. cit. p. 158

(Fifteenth Street) and is located on Fifteenth Street between Market and West Streets in Oakland. The church has a membership of over eight hundred (full members and probationers) and values its property at $40,000.00. The only early historical record of the church was obtained from an Oakland pioneer who wrote the story of the church in 1897 and kept the record hidden away in an old trunk:

> "This church had an humble origin when Oakland numbered few houses and little over a thousand inhabitants. During the spring of 1858 a mission was organized in a small house on 5th Street (near the "point") by Mr. and Mrs. John Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Flood, Mrs. John Peterson and others. In a few years this mission became so strong that the prime movers seemed to think that they wanted a home of their own to worship in and in 1863 a building, located at 7th and Market (sts) was purchased, which had formerly been a school house--built by Mr. Carpentier for the city a number of years before.
>
> "The bulk of the purchase price was paid by Mr. Judge Shafter (a white friend) who seemed quite friendly to the society. The sum of money given by him was $300.00 and with the aid of money collected by a few of the interested ones the house was duly paid for. The trustees of the society, which we will call for the time being "Shiloh A.M.E. Church, were T.B. Davidson, Abe Gross, Wm. W. Rich, John Thomas, John Thompkins and Isaac Flood.
>
> "The pastorate was very irregular for the first few years: the pulpit being filled from time to time by ministers from San Francisco and elsewhere. Rev. T.M.D. Ward, who afterwards became one of the bishops of the A.M.E. Church in the U. S. often thrilled our hearts with his eloquence, accompanied by a voice that was musical, full toned and sonorous. At this time he was Missionary Elder for the Pacific coast appointed by the Reverend Daniel A. Payne. Reverend Mr. Ward was also the first regularly ordained minister of the A.M.E. Church west of the Rockies.

The little church, with its Sunday School, which was organized by Isaac Flood and Mr. Warren and taught by Mr. Holcomb of the First M.E. church on 14th street, (now at 26th and Broadway) thrived and grew and under the pastorate of Rev. J.B. Sanderson the building was enlarged in 1875. Under his leadership the church had numbers of accessions and membership of fifty persons. The S.S. (Sunday school) prospered and comprised some thirty scholars. The trustees at this time were A. Gross, Lewis Whiting, Mumford Harris, Isaac West and Isaac Flood. Rev. Sanderson remained pastor up to the time he met his death by a most deplorable accident. After this time the following pastors succeeded each other: Reverends I.N. Triplett, J.J. Dyer, M. Weir, J. Grigsby. Under the leadership of the last named pastor the church was removed to its present situation and was dedicated in March 1884 as the First A.M.E. Church. The trustees at this time were J.W. Smith, J.A. Wildo, Lewis Whiting, Hillery Burns, Cooper Smith and Isaac Flood. Under the management of these officers and pastor we had a more commodious place of worship.

"Our church as many other organizations of the kind was some what in debt: but in a few years after with hard and determined effort under the pastorate of Rev. D. E. Johnson the members and friends succeeded in wiping out the debt which had hung so heavily upon us.

"Reverend I. M. Burgan pastored our church for a short time and was succeeded by Rev. Allen Viney who in the few months that he was among us was instrumental in raising $1400.00 and placed our church in a very nice condition materially. Under each leader the church has grown spiritually and numerically and at the present time, under the leadership of our much loved pastor, Rev. Edwards, the church is still progressing, and in better condition than it has been for some time past. The present membership including probationers is 113 and the number of S.S. (Sunday School) scholars is 135. The present trustees are H. Bishop, F. V. Hatton, E. Barrett, W. B. Bridges H. R. Morgan, A. F. Holland, G. H. Washington, D. R. Young."[4]

[4]Amos, Elenora, History of First A.M.E. Church in June 27, 1897 (Original Manuscript)

LEADERS OF THE CHURCH.

Since the writing of the early history of the local church the following pastors have served as leaders of the congregation: Reverends E. T.Cottman, O. E. Jones, G. E. Tillman, J. Pointer, A.O.D. Steele, N. P. Greegs, F. J. Peck, J. M. Brown, Nelson Pryor and T. D. Scott. These leaders have been "synthetic social workers" as well as preachers and pastors. They have held the unique position of leadership as pastors of the oldest and largest congregation in the East Bay District. They have espoused religious, educational, political, recreational and social programs and have made the church central in the lives of the Negro population in the Oakland community.

The life of the city has grown more and more complex since the days of the Pioneers, and the center of Negro population in Oakland has shifted from West to East and North Oakland. The old church homes of the congregation which were located on Fifth Street (near the "point") and thence on Seventh Street near Market, were well located for the Colored population of those days. The present structure, however, is not in the proverbial "Negro Belt" and has become a "down town church" for the Negroes in the East Bay district. The rapid growth and changing status of the Negro population has been characteristic of the entire population of the state of California.

Whereas there were 4,086 "Free people of color" in the State of California in 1865, the U. S. Census for 1930 gives 81,048 as the present race population of the commonwealth. Since there is a direct relation between the local population and the church membership we will consider the source which furnishes the workers for the social institution denominated the church.

SOURCES OF THE POPULATION

The Negro population of the Pacific Coast states is small when compared with the same population in the eastern or southern states, but there has been a definite increase in the number of these people in the coast states during the past decade. The following table gives the present status of the White and Negro populations in the Pacific coast states for 1930:

TABLE VI POPULATION OF THE PACIFIC COAST STATES

Color or Race and Nativity 1930

Pacific Coast	Total	White	Negro	Per cent
Washington	1,563,396	1,521,099	6,840	0.4
Oregon	953,786	937,029	2,234	0.2
California	5,677,251	5,040,247	81,048	1.4

Total Negro population of Pacific Coast 90,122 [5]

TABLE VII

POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES BY

COLOR RACE AND NATIVITY

		Per cent distribution
Total population	122,775,046	100.0
White	108,864,207	88.7

[5] U. S. Census, Vol. II - 1930

TABLE VII con.[6]

		Per cent distribution
Negro	11,891,143	9.7
All other races	2,019,696	1.6

TABLE VIII[7]

POPULATION OF COUNTIES CONTIGUOUS

TO THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY DISTRICT

County	Total pop.	N. Male	N. Female	Tot. Negro	Percent
Alameda	474,883	5,000	5,150	10,150	1.8
Contra Costa	78,608	214	141	355	0.4
Marin	41,648	261	29	290	0.7
San Francisco	634,394	2,190	1,613	3,803	0.6

Total Negro population of the Bay District by counties: 14,598

TABLE IX[8]

SAN FRANCISCO BAY DISTRICT URBAN POPULATION

FOR 1930 (Cities 20,000 and more)

City	Tot. pop.	White	Negro	Per cent Negro
Berkeley	82,100	77,508	2,177	2.7
Oakland	284,063	267,476	7,503	2.6
San Franc.	634,394	594,969	3,803	0.6
Alameda	35,033	33,679	294	0.8
Richmond	20,093	18,800	48	0.002
Total Negro population			13,825	

TABLE X

NUMERICAL GROWTH IN NEGRO POPULATION

(San Francisco Bay District 1920-'30.)

City	1920	1930	Increase
San Francisco	2,414	3,803	1,389
Berkeley	507	2,177	1,670
Oakland	5,489	7,503	2,014

6,7,8 U.S. Census, Vol. II - 1930

TABLE X con.[9]

City	1920	1930	Increase
Alameda	217	294	77
Richmond		48	

Increase during the past ten years 5,198 Per cent Inc. 37.5

From the fore-going tables it appears that the urban Negro population of the East Bay district is now 10,022 persons, and that this is the number of the entire Bay District population which is served by the First A.M.E. Church and all other Negro churches of the cities considered in this study.

THE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The First A.M.E. Church of Oakland, California, has a total membership of eight hundred and eleven persons (662 adults and 161 probationers) which is 12.36 per cent of the entire Negro population in the East Bay district. The statistical report of this church, made at the Annual Conference in Fresno, California in September 1934 gives a summary of the general activities and finances for the church year ending at that time. From this summary one may note the growth of the church organization and formulate a program of Social Action for the local church and community for the year.

Church report:

TABLE XI[10]

Conversions	14	Financial report:	
Full members	650		
Accessions	38	Value of property	$50,000.00
Probationers	161	Value of parsonage	4,000.00
Local Preachers	2	Amount by School	74.32
Stewards	9	By the League	20.00
Stewardesses	8	By societies	552.94
Class Leaders	30	Dollar Money report	668.00
Trustees	9	Contingent Fund	10.00
Infant baptisms	8	Gen. Conf. delegate	5.00
Marriages	3	Minute Fund	3.50
Deaths	10	Easter Day Fund	53.00
No. of churches	1	Children's Day	5.00
Parsonages	1	Bible Cause	1.00
Church Schools	1	Allen Day Fund	10.00
Officers of School	5	Educational Fund	53.00
Teachers in school	7	Pension Fund	5.00
Pupils in school	100	Charitable fund	123.91
School library	200	Building and rep.	1,500.10
Lesson sheets	60	Presiding Elder	240.00
A.C.E. League	1	Pastor's salary	1,707.50
Members in League	30	Paid on church debt	400.00
Auxilliaries	15	Indebtedness	2,834.50

[10]Proceedings of the 70th Annual Session of California of the A.M.E. Church, September 19-23, 1934. P. 59 f.

A PROGRAM OF SOCIAL ACTION FOR THE FIRST A.M.E. CHURCH OF OAKLAND

RELIGIOUS ROOTS OF THE SOCIAL IDEAL

Reinold Niebuhr, Professor of Applied Christianity in Union Theological Seminary, calls attention to the fundamental part religion has played in making its contribution to social work. To the student of religion it becomes apparent that the "social mind" has been in evidence for many centuries and in a number of places. In "Hebraic antiquity a growing social conscience was clearly involved in the development of religion". This place of the social conscience is witnessed in many Old Testament references.[1] There is ample justification for a program of social action in the church today and such a program might rest upon the points suggested in "The Social Gospel." The task of the church through a program of Social action should be:

1. To inspire men to faith in God--a heavenly Father.
2. An emphasis placed upon the "supremacy of things of the spirit".
3. Advocate change in society as will bring us nearer the ideal of human brotherhood.
4. The church must inspire men to Christ-like conduct.
5. The church must unite in spirit to embody the principle of good will.[2]

These principles may be considered essential to any religious program of social action, and upon them as

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[1] Deuteronomy 24:19; 14: 28-29; Exodus 23: 11 f.

[2] Schofield, Charles E., The Church Looks Ahead (Chap. X) (article by C.C. McCown, "The Social Gospel.")

a foundation, we shall build a program adapted to the needs of the local religious organization--the First A. M. E. Church of Oakland.

THE CHURCH AND WAR.

The church is concerned with war in all of its aspects. Negro soldiers have participated in all the wars of the nation and have been found loyal in all circumstances. It is inevitable that Negro troops will be inducted into the service in event of another war. The Twenty Fourth and Twenty Fifth Infantries and a remnant of the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry are composed of Negro non-commissioned officers and enlisted men. What should be the attitude of the local church concerning war?

The United States government will maintain a standing army and navy for precautionary and police purposes. It is the belief of a majority of the members of the local church that the present military units in the army (Negro) should be retained. It is the purpose of this organization, through its Young Peoples' Department, the A. C. E. League and the Church School, to work in the maintenance of peace and the abolition of war in the following manner:

1. By advocating adherence of the government to the World Court and to cooperate with all international peace organizations.

2. Through participation in student conferences for the abolition of war.

3. By attacking economic imperialism; competitive manufacture and sale of munitions; increased expenditures of the government for armament and compulsory military training.

4. By recommending the manufacture of arms by the state and the effort to effect international control of arms.

5. Through the bringing of advocates of world peace to the pulpit and to auxilliary meetings of the church to address the group.

RACE RELATIONS

We shall familiarize ourselves with the field of race relations in the following way:

Through an acquaintance with the facts of population of our own group, and of the white race relative to geographical distribution in the nation, state, county, city and local district.

Through Men's Club activities, Women's Council and Young People's Society we shall study the history of our own country and of the Negro Race in America. Special attention shall be given to the observance of Negro history week. Materials for this study may be obtained from the "Association For The Study of Negro Life and History" (Wasnington, D.C.)

Additional steps in the Inter-racial program of education shall be:

1. A discovery of the resources in the local community.

2. Talks by well informed individuals. Invitations to visiting white clergymen and educators.

3. An occasional evening spent in the discussion of Negro Art.

4. Development of the Ministry of Music in the Church. Use of the folk-songs, spirituals and jubilee numbers. Talks on the "Negro Spirituals" by some one

> who knows and appreciates the music of these people. The objective is to create an appreciation for this beautiful music and to learn of the distinctive contribution which has been made through it. The Negro has in his own music one of the approaches to the ultimate settlement of the problem of racial conflict in America.

The church shall work with existing agencies in all matters of race relations and in all instances of racial conflict recourse shall be made to the legal department of the local N. A. A. C. P., the Oakland Council of Churches and to the religious and social leaders in the Bay district. To effect a more thorough approach to this question, the local church shall take the following action:

> It shall work to secure the appointment of representatives of minority groups on Emergency Relief and employment committees.
>
> It shall work through the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to prevent and remove all discrimination.
>
> It shall seek to improve the housing condition of the minority group in the community.
>
> It shall provide newspapers with material that will educate the community on happenings of an inter-racial character.
>
> Circulate books and magazines on race relations among members of other churches.
>
> Secure speakers (carefully selected) who may appear before lodges, churches, etc.
>
> The Church shall study the problem of other minority groups as the Japanese, Chinese and Mexicans.
>
> Exhibit books and works of art produced by Negroes, and present musical events such as those sponsored by this church at the First Presbyterian Church of Oakland and the First

Presbyterian church of Berkeley, California.

The church shall urge the passage of the Costigan-Wagner Anti-lynching Bill (S. 24) by Congress, which seeks to wipe out an American cannabilistic practice. The evil of lynching is no longer sectional (southern) in its scope and is no longer restricted to black citizens as victims.

Information for the intelligent conduct of this program may be obtained from the:

The Commission on Inter-Racial Co-operation.
The National Urban League. New York City, N.Y.
Commission on Race Relations Federal and local Council of Churches.
Young Mens' Christian Association (local office)
Young Women's Christian Association
The Society of Friends (local headquarters)
The Fellowship of Reconciliation
The American Civil Liberties Union
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.
International Labor Defence.

NATIONAL NEGRO HEALTH WEEK

Twenty-one years ago, Booker T. Washington, founder of Tuskeegee Institute, educator of Negro youth, organized the first Negro Health Week program. Since that time, the movement to enlist all the forces in the nation in a campaign for the better health of the citizenry has grown until the government now directs this activity as one of its major objectives. The United States Public Health Service issues an annual bulletin to assist in this program.

The local church (First A. M. E. Church of Oakland) won the "Certificate of Merit" issued by the U.S.P.H.S. to the community unit which presented the best health

program for the year 1934. This was the first health award given to a Negro organization in Alameda County, California. This year the following health program was observed:

Sunday March 31--Mobolization Day. Health lectures in the church at 8 p.m.
Home Health Day--Monday April 1.
Community Sanitation Day--Tuesday April 2.
Special Campaign Day--Wednesday April 3.
Adult's Health Day--Thursday April 4.
School Health Day--Friday April 5.
General Clean Up Day--Saturday April 6.
Report and Follow up Day--Sunday April 7.

In addition to the regular program for Health week, the local church school presented a health week service. A teacher of the school (a registered nurse) directed this project. Through the assistance and leadership of the physician and three dentists who are members of the congregation, the health program will be continued at intervals through out the year. Information for this work may be secured from:

American Child Health Association--50 W. 50th Street, N.Y.C.
Atlanta School of Social Service--Herndon Building. Atlanta, Georgia.
National Tuberculosis Association--50 W 50th Street. N.Y.C.
National Urban League--1133 Broadway, N.Y.C.
Negro Civic Welfare Association--1041 Cutter Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Tuskeegee Institute--Tuskeegee, Alabama.
National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses--50 " 50th Street, N.Y.C.
Local Health Department--The City of Oakland, California.
State Health Department--Sacramento, California.
United States Public Health Service--Washington, D.C.[3]

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[3]United States Public Health Service. Bulletin No. 1932

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

The Negro Population of the East Bay district face the same great economic problems that their brothers of the eastern and southern urban centers confront. Here as elsewhere the Colored man is generally the "last to be hired and the first to be fired". The condition that existed relative to colored workers during the San Francisco Longshoreman's Strike is not uncommon today in some of the eastern and southern ports. Relatively few Negro Longshoremen are employed in the ports of the Pacific coast today. Negro labor finds employment in the Pullman Service as porters and as dining car waiters; as janitors and cooks, hotel men and general laborers. Well organized and hostile labor unions block the entrance of Colored Americans and prevent their employment in the San Francisco Bay district.

To overcome this handicap of prejudice which strikes at the very heart of existence itself--i.e. the right to work and to live in decency--this church advises the following program of action:

> Let every man and woman, now employed, strive to render the most efficient, courteous service at all times and under all conditions.
>
> Let every member now employed and seeking employment strive to gain the most excellent preparation for the job. Attend both day and night schools and keep everlastingly in search of better mental and moral equipment.
>
> Avail yourself of the good offices of National, State, county and municipal employment agencies.

Take the National and State Civil service examinations for which you are prepared.

Seek to build up a little business of your own. Local business men will give you advise and cooperation. When the business venture develops make employment for someone else.

Work to establish a branch office of the National Urban League in Oakland. This National organization will furnish the Negro community with a trained social worker who is prepared to deal with problems of employment and social service in the local community.

Call attention of the Catholic and Protestant Christian membership through local council of churches, to the proscription against Negro labor in the Bay district, and work through local organizations to remove these handicaps.

General objectives shall be:

1. A national system of social insurance and pensions.

2. Minimum wage legislation for all Americans.

3. Acknowledgement of the right of workers to organize.

4. Settlement of disputes through peaceful methods.

5. Government ownership and control of public utilities, transportation and all natural resources.

6. Limited governmental supervision of private industry, advertising, business.

7. Protection of the interests of the consumer.

8. A more equitable distribution of wealth through the taxation of large private and corporation incomes.

SOCIAL SERVICE IN COOPERATION WITH EXISTING SOCIAL AGENCIES

The church will attempt no program of professional social service of its own but will cooperate to the fullest

extent with local and national social agencies. Resources in the community such as: The Young Women's Christian Association, The Young Men's Christian Association, The Fanny Wall Home and Day Nursery, and The Old Peoples' Home will be supported by the church organization. Leaders of these agencies will assist in any program for the youth of the church.

Local social agencies will be consulted for advise in all matters arising in the local church which demand the supervision of trained workers as: juvenile or adult delinquency; mental tests for children or adults; medical examinations; instruction in social hygiene and sex education; programs calling for volunteer social service; giving of Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets through the Confidential Exchange. The church, therefore, shall attempt cooperation "with" and not competition "against" existing social agencies. Local agencies will furnish leaders, literature, and will work in any agreeable way with the local church in its program. To this approach the minister of the church brings his services as a trained social worker.

The Men's and Women's clubs shall consider such subjects as:

The sex education of youth.
Instruction of the young for married life.
A study of state regulations relative to marriage laws.
A study of the state divorce laws.

Dissemination of scientific birth control information under proper social and medical safeguards.

The abolition of child labor.
Adequate Mother's pensions.
A study of the factors responsible for crime.
(The Negro and crime.)
Discriminatory practices against colored workers through the governmental codes.

Juvenile delinquency of Negro youth in district #1 (Oakland, California).

A local program of social service for the Stewardesses Boards and Women's organization of the church shall include: visiting of the sick, assistance to shut-ins with marketing, house work, etc; preparation of the altar of the church for the Sacrament of Communion; attendance upon the sick of the church; flower and decoration committees; use of the charity fund for "emergency cases" of own membership.

POLITICAL MATTERS

Every adult member of the church shall be urged to register and to participate in the election of honest, efficient, fair candidates to office. The minister of the church shall not endorse or sponsor a political candidate or party.[4]

We reaffirm our belief in the constitutional guarantees of free speech, free press, and the right of assembly.

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[4]Lecture of Dr. Herman A. Swartz, President, The Pacific School of Religion.

THE FIELD OF SERVICE

The First African Methodist Episcopal church is located on Fifteenth Street between Market and West, in District No. 1 in Oakland, California. The membership of the church is distributed as follows: (residence)

North Oakland	full members	261
Berkeley	full members	197
West Oakland	full members	127
East Oakland	full members	51
Alameda	full members	3
Adjoining territory	full members	23
	Total	662

Approximate number of full members in district No. 1--442.

The physical plant of the church affords a main auditorium (capacity 500); lecture room)capacity 250); Stewardesses room; Choir room; Children's room; Men's and Women's rest rooms. The lecture room is used for the church school meetings, for play nights, mid-week prayer services, entertainments, etc. The nature of the annual church program is revealed by table No. VI.

The church membership is divided into thirty classes. Each class is directed by a "leader" who is directly responsible to the pastor and Stewards Board of the church. This is the old "Wesleyan system" and has helped to unite the church and to reach the membership.

The local church must extend its activities beyond the confines (geographical and numerical) of its own immediate membership. It must serve its own local parishoners and cooperate in a program of social action for the district.

District No. I

District No. I is bounded on the north by Emeryville City limits which runs east to Adeline to 40th Street and east on 40th street to Telegraph; thence due south on Telegraph to 14th Street and east on 14th Street to Fallon and south on Fallon Street to the Inner Harbor; west through Inner Harbor to the end of the Oakland-Alameda city line to the Key System Mole; following the Key System Transit Company lines the district boundary runs east to the Emeryville City limits.

The First A. M. E. Church is located in district No. 1 (centrally) and on the "fringe" of the downtown business district. The church stands just outside of the North Oakland Negro residential district which lies north of San Pablo Avenue; and outside of the West Oakland residential district for Negroes which is bounded on the west by Market Street.

TABLE XII

Legend: District Number 1. Location of church--blue spot.
Negro residential district
shaded in red pencil (North of
San Pablo and West of Market)

Area of district--4 square miles. Total population-6,200

A survey of District No. 1 reveals the Negro belt to be located in the city section in which it is usually found in the large urban centers of the east and south, i.e. the railroad and water front area.

TABLE NO. XII con.

District No. 1	Area 4 square miles	
Population, 1930 census	58873	
Population, estimated 1934	62205	
Average density	13916	
Maximum density	18326	
Population on relief (S.E.R.A.)	739	
Population dependent upon work relief 4.3 persons per family	3178	
Population percentage dependent upon Work relief		5.1 % population.
Population on direct relief	318	
Population dependent upon Direct relief 2.6 persons to family	827	1.3 % Total population.
Total population dependent upon Work and Direct Relief	4005	
Percentage of population dependent upon Work Relief and Direct Relief		6.4 %

TABLE NO. XIII

Distribution by Race

White, Native	40476	65 % Total Population.
White, Foreign	14805	24 % Total Population.
Negro and others	6924	11 % Total Population.

Dual Occupancy (homes) 16.9 %

TABLE NO. XIV

ORGANIZING FORCES IN THE DISTRICT:

Public libraries 4

TABLE NO. XIV con.

Circulating libraries	5	
Campfire Girls clubs	2	
Girl Scouts	1	
Boy Scouts	19	Colored boys may be members of all Scout units.
Halls (public)	18	
Municipal Parks	11	Play ground directors in charge of both parks and school playgrounds.
School Play grounds	12	
Junior Red Cross Units	8	
Home Teachers	4	(Working in cooperation with P.T.A.'s, schools and homes.
PUBLIC SCHOOLS:		
Senior High Schools	2	
Junior High Schools	3	
Elementary Schools	8	
Parochial and Private Schools	12	
Parent Teacher Associations	9	
School Counselors (High)	2	
School Counsellors (Junior)	3	
Community Chest Associations	17	
Associations for Colored work	3	in the district.
Business and Improvement Clubs	8	(One colored club)
Other clubs in the district	21	
Theatres in the district	16	

TABLE NO. XV

DISORGANIZING FORCES IN THE DISTRICT:

Dance Halls (public)	5	

TABLE NO. XV con.

Dancing Schools	9	
Public Cabarets	11	
Pool Halls	29	(Colored - 6)
Cards or Gambling Devises	20	(Colored - 5)
Junk Yards	19	
Auto Wrecking and Second Hand parts	7	
LIQUOR STORES - total -	484	
	191	(sell liquor to drink off premises)
	248	(sell liquor to drink on premises)
	45	(not specified)

The large number of liquor stores, junk yards and auto wrecking plants, gambling devises, pool halls, cabarets and dance halls are contributing factors to juvenile and adult delinquency. (see Shaw-Delinquency Areas). Within the district, the church must work with other constructive, organizing social and religious forces to control and eliminate these contributing factors to crime and organized vice.[5]

TABLE NO. XVI

CHURCHES IN THE DISTRICT:

Colored	13	Serbian	1
Chinese	5	Mexican	1
Japanese	4	Hebrew	3
Italian	1	Pentacostal and Metaphysical	29
Greek Catholic	1		
Orthodox white	18		

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[5]Co-ordinating Council Survey--1934-'35

TABLE NO. XVI con.

Total no. of churches in district 76

From the foregoing record it appears that there is one church for every 818 residents of the district. There is one Negro congregation for every 533 members of the race in the district.

CONCLUSION

The local church hereby associates itself with the Oakland Co-ordinating Council through its pastor, and offers its services in a program which touches the problems of the district No. 1. Such a program shall embrace:

The suppression of the large number of saloons in the district.
Greater use of playground and school facilities.
Greater use of public libraries.
Programs for youth directed by White and Negro churches and by local social agencies.
Larger participation of Negro parents in the activities of the P.T.A.'s in the district.
Supervision of local theatres through proper channels.
A study of pool halls, cabarets, gambling houses and other dis-organizing forces in the community, with special reference to the effect upon Negro youth in the district.[6]

Thus we may reduce the number of cases of juvenile delinquency in the district.

It is not the purpose of the local church to abandon its own program of religious education and instruction, but, rather, to furnish the basis of motivation for a

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[6]Steiner, Jesse F., Community Organization, p. 32

program of Social Action in cooperation with existing social agencies in the district. This is a long time project--one stretching over the span of several decades. It is a program which cannot be measured in terms of dollars and cents or in terms of the numerical accession of "souls". Through a preaching and teaching ministry; through church school, young peoples' societies, church auxilliaries, through the development of a new and intelligent religious morale; through the evolution of well rounded Christian personality; by cooperation in spirit and in fact with constructive religious forces in the district this church may do its part in bringing to pass the existence of a "BLESSED COMMUNITY" in district number one of Oakland, California. Thus we may add our portion of the "yeast of faith" which shall leaven the whole!

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